

Governor's State Workforce Investment Board Youth Council

**State Capitol Building – Helena, MT
February 14, 2008**

DRAFT MINUTES

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Gail Richardson, Chair; Margret Bowles; Curt Campbell; Dan Dolan; Karen Duncan; Sara Fox; Jake Gustin; and James McDonald.

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT: Marcy Buster; Tescha Hawley; Warren Means; Mike Nephew; and James Patelis.

STAFF: Eamon Hansen; Danielle Nettleton; Leisa Smith; and Connie Kinsey (advisory).

GUESTS: Drea Brown, Lisa Newman, Suzanne Ferguson, K. Taylor, Jan Rouse, Ron Carol, Arlene Parisot, Reid Lund, Will Ayers, and Finale Ayers.

I. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Gail Richardson called the meeting to order at 12:40 p.m. She welcomed staff, council members, and guests. Leisa Smith introduced Eamon Hansen, State Workforce Investment Board's (SWIB) new Program Specialist.

- Roll Call, Housekeeping, New Documents

Danielle Nettleton conducted roll call, addressed house keeping items, and reviewed the meeting documents presented. Chair Richardson explained that the council conducts business under Roberts Rules of Order. She stated she would relax Roberts Rules of Order to allow informal discussion among members. She reminded council members to please state their name clearly when speaking for the accuracy of the minutes.

- Agenda

Chair Richardson asked if there were any changes to the Agenda. The agenda was approved as presented by consensus.

- Meeting Minutes – November 16, 2007

Chair Richardson asked if there were any changes to the November 16, 2007 minutes. With no changes presented the minutes were approved by consensus.

II. Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Updates

Connie Kinsey announced the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) has made five to seven grants available for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Opportunities in the Workforce System Initiative (STEM Initiative); with average awards ranging

from \$1.5 million to \$2 million. She explained the grant will come in two phases. In phase one the states will present ideas and determine the status of the state. If you do not pass this phase you won't continue to the next phase; which has not been developed. The grantees will hopefully share their best practices to all workforce systems. The grants would be run through One-Stop systems. WIA is in the process of researching and will develop a proposal and bring it to the board.

Suzanne Ferguson explained the carry forward funding presented at the last meeting was mostly from re-allotments from USDOL. Although the dollars were distributed to program operators, there has been a rescission from USDOL and they are asking the money be returned. More information will be forthcoming in the upcoming weeks.

III. Montana Shared Youth Vision

Ms. Kinsey reported the mission of the Shared Youth Vision Partnership is to serve as a catalyst at the national, state, and local levels to strengthen coordination, communication, and collaboration among youth-serving agencies to support the neediest youth and their healthy transition to successful adult roles and responsibilities. She explained the objective is to develop and coordinate policy. In 2007, 16 pilot states were chosen. Each pilot state will mentor another state; Utah is Montana's mentor. The Youth Council will be the Shared Youth Vision Team's connection to the State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB) and the Governor of Montana. Currently the team members include Margret Bowles, Marcy Buster, Karen Duncan, and Connie Kinsey. After meeting in the fall of 2007 the team began working on Montana's Plan for a shared youth vision. After sharing the work each team member does to serve youth, a common thread of education was identified. The team believes education is key for every student to succeed in life. The team's goal is to raise the number of at risk youth served by 5% before 2010. Currently 3,000 youth, of all ages, obtain a GED per year. Ms. Duncan reported the core team will begin to recruit more involvement from entities who understand the benefit of the team. She described the team's plan to research resources from asset mapping. Kids in corrections can be difficult but they need a chance to become educated or they will have a disadvantage at succeeding in life. Most youth stay in corrections less than 9 months. Ms. Bowles reported the team will do asset mapping to mine down the data and find the best practices and plug them into each agency. Jim McDonald asked what the incentive is for other agencies to get involved. Ms. Duncan noted her incentive to become involved is learning what's available for youth through other agency's and their programs. Sara Fox offered her help as a WIA Youth Provider. Chair Richardson commented the potential sounds incredible.

IV. Presentations

▪ Office of Public Instruction

Ms. Bowles, the director of the adult basic education program reported she works with individuals 16 or older who are not in a secondary school. The program assists individual with obtaining a GED, getting a job, learning to read, enter post secondary school, and many other available options. The program is available across the state serving diverse populations and assists them in achieving their goals. Ms. Bowles described some of the situations seen with program participants. The program economically impacts Montana by employing the unemployed. In 2005 1,528 students transitioned into their set goals. In 2000, over 121,000 Montana residences did not have a GED, creating a large pool of potential workers if they completed their education. 38% of the individuals are between the ages of 16 and 24. Ms. Bowles encouraged entities to work

together to serve these individuals and bring them into Montana's workforce. GED's can now be obtained through an online program. Employers are assisting by paying the expenses and providing incentives for their employees to obtain their GED's.

- **Department of Corrections**

Ms. Duncan reported her program was started with a federal grant to help serve youth. Last legislative session the program received funding through the general fund. There are many individuals who are involved in the re-entry process for a youth who is being released from a juvenile corrections facility. Every youth is assigned a team of individuals who provide support in helping the youth succeed including probation officers, case managers, and mentors. Every team is developed based on the youth's needs. There are also American Indian programs providing many volunteers to help successfully assist the youth. Ms. Duncan asked for volunteers to help demonstrate the process and effects on a community and the individuals involved in the re-entry.

- **Montana Youth Challenge**

Ron Carol, Lead Admissions Counselor, provided an overview presentation of the Montana Youth Challenge Program. The first thing a youth is asked before entering the program is if they physically and mentally ready to accept the challenge. The program is designed to assist at risk youth by focusing on a structured environment. Mr. Carol explained the structured schedule the youth follow, including community service on weekends. He reported on various community projects across Montana. After completing the program the youth keep in contact with a mentor while following a developed plan. Youth become registered to vote and get involved with their communities.

- **Jobs for Montana Graduates (JMG)**

Two years ago Finale Ayers won a local competitive public speaking event allowing her to travel with Drea Brown, Director of the JMG program to Washington DC. She gave her speech at the national conference and traveled back a second time to give her speech to the Jobs for Americas Graduates winter conference. Ms. Ayers gave her speech to the Youth Council, describing her challenges growing up and how JMG helped her. She missed lots of school because of drug use and hanging out with the wrong crowd. Before she was unsure of herself and after participating in JMG she became more self assured. Her drug use was part of spending time with family. At 12 years old she placed in foster care and received help with her drug problems, including the daily use of marijuana. During her second year in JMG she ran for secretary and worked on other programs. In her third year she took a risk and wrote a letter making her a successful candidate to attend the national conference. After spending a large part of her life feeling unworthy, she came home from DC and ran for president her fourth year in JMG and utilized her learned leadership skills. She is thankful for the opportunities presented and the people she met. Ms. Ayers is going to attend school to become an interior designer and business owner. When JMG came into her life it gave her opportunity to succeed, and she thanks all who support the program. Ms. Brown stated the program works and students benefit from it.

- **Commissioner of Higher Education – Career Pathways**

Arlene Parisot, Director Workforce Development and Two-Year Education, presented an overview of the Carl D. Perkins State Plan and Big Sky Pathways-Building a skilled workforce for Montana. The presentation highlighted the Perkins Federal Grant, the Perkins Leadership Structure, Allocation of Funds, and Factors Influencing Workforce Shortages. There are more Native Americans who drop out of High School than Americans. A large number of youth have

stopped short of their potential because we have failed them. The global economy requires more education. She provided an overview of Career Clusters and Career Pathways, describing links between business, industry, and education. The goal is to move individuals into high demand, skill, and wage occupations. Ms. Parisot gave an example of an employer assisting and encouraging its workers to move up the career ladder and become educated. The collective challenge is to design the frame work that allows stakeholders, industry, education, and the public sector to work together giving untapped pools of workers that “second chance” or new direction at the local level.

▪ **Discussion**

Chair Richardson asked why the Youth Challenge Program is so successful. Mr. Carol explained his program works in an interesting and successful way by removing all the distracters including cell phones, iPods, and boyfriends and girlfriends. The program is highly structured and works in a very scheduled environment with more discipline creating an effective teaching environment.

Ms. Brown elaborated on the JMG program, explaining the four year curriculum. The classes usually hold 20 students who are targeted by counselors and principles. JMG has a systematic approach to keep youth in school. Students work on projects to learn employability skills. Every year there are two student conferences where competitive events take place. The class is successful because the teachers are taught to teach differently and make the class their own, including no lectures or handouts.

V. Other Business

Ms. Smith reminded everyone to review Module One from the WIRED 101 DVD that was mailed. She also announced a link to the Martin Bean presentation would be forwarded to council members. Chair Richardson discussed possible options for a future meeting, including traveling to a reservation and bringing in the at risk youth. The next Youth Council meeting will take place on May 29, 2008 and the location will be forthcoming.

With no further business Chair Richardson adjourned the meeting at 3:55 p.m.